C111.

An Explanation of the *Roman Catholikes* Belief, concerning these foure Points: Their *Church*; *Worship*; *Justification*; and *civill Government*.

As it was presented to some Persons of Quality, for their particular satisfaction.

I. WE believe the holy *Scriptures* to be of divine inspiration and infallible Authority; and whatsoever therein contained we firmly assent unto, as to the Word of God, the Author of all Truth.

2 Pet. 3. 16. But since in the holy Scriptures there are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstable wrest to their own destruction; we therefore professe (for the ending of controversies, and our Religion, and setling of peace in our Consciences) to submit our private judgements to the Judgment of the Church, represented in a free Generall Councell.

II. 2. We humbly believe the sacred Mystery of the *Blessed Trinity*, one Eternall, Almighty, and Incomprehensible God, whom only we adore and worship, as alone having Soveraign Dominion over all things, to whom only, we acknowledge as due, from men and Angells, all glory, service, and obedience; abhorring from our 1 Tim. 1. 17. hearts, as a most detestable Sacriledge, to give our Creators honor to any creature whatsoever.

And therefore we solemnly protest, that by the prayers we addresse to *Angells* and *Saints*, we intend no other then humbly to sollicite their assistance before the Throne of God, as we desire the prayers of one another here upon earth, not that we hope any thing from them, as originall Authors thereof, but from God the Fountain of all Goodnesse, through *Jesus Christ*, our only Mediator and Redeemer.

Neither do we believe any divinity or vertue to be in *Images*, for which they ought to be worship't, as the *Gentiles* did their *Idolls*, but we retain them with due and decent respect in our Churches, as instruments which we find by experience, do often assist our memories, and excite our affections.

III. 3. We firmly believe, that no force of nature nor dignity of our best works can merit our *Justification*, but we Rom. 3. 24. are justified freely by *grace*, through the Redemption that is in *Jesus Christ*.

And although we should by the grace of God persevere unto the end in a godly life and holy obedience to the Commandements; yet are our hopes of eternall glory still built upon the mercy of God, and the merits of *Christ Jesus*.

All other *merits*, (according to our sense of that word) signifie no more, then Actions done by the assistance of Gods grace, to which it has pleased his goodnesse to promise a reward; a Doctrine so far from being [illegible] suitable to the sense of the holy Scriptures, that is of their principall design to invite and provoke us to a diligent observance of the *Commandements*, by proposing heaven as the reward of our obedience. 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. Godlinesse is profitable to all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come. And *Rom.* 2. 6. God will render to every man according to his deeds, to them, who by patient confidence in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternall life. And again, *Rom.* 8. 13. If you live after the flesh you shall die, but if through the spirit you mortifie the deeds of the body, *you shall live*. And *Heb.* 6. 10. God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love, which you have shewed for his name, &c. Nothing being so frequently repeated in the Word of God, as his gracious promises to recompense with everlasting glory the faith and obedience of his servants; Nor is the bounty of God barely according to our works, but high and Luk. 6. 38. plentifull, even beyond our capacities, giving full measure, heaped up, pressed down, and running over into the bosomes of all that love him.

Thus we believe the merit or rewardableness of our holy living (both which signifie the same thing with us) arises not from the self-value even of our best Actions, as they are ours, but from the Grace and Bounty of God; and for our selves, we sincerely profess that when we have done all those things, which are commanded us, Luk. 17. 10 we are unprofitable servants, having done nothing but that which was our duty, so that our boasting is not in our selves, but all our glorying is in *Christ*.

IV. 4. We firmly believe, and highly reverence the *Morall Law* being so solemnly delivered to *Moses* upon the Exod. 20. Mount, so expressely confirmed by our Saviour in the Gospell, and containing in it self so perfect an Abridg- Mar. 19. ment of our whole duty both to God and man.

Eccles. 12. 13. Which *Morall Law* we believe obliges all men to proceed with faithfullnesse and sincerity in their mutuall contracts one towards another; and therefore our constant Profession is, that we are most strictly and absolutely bound to the exact and entire performance of our promises, made to any person of what Religion soever; much more to the Magistrates and Civill Powers, under whose protection we live, whom we are taught by the Word of God to obey, not only for fear, but conscience sake; and to whom we will most faithfully observe our promises of duty and obedience, notwithstanding any dispensation, absolution, or other proceedings of any forraign Power or Authority whatsoever.

Wherefore we utterly deny and renounce that false and scandalous position, that *Faith is not to be kept with Heretikes*, as most uncharitably imputed to our practises, and most unjustly pinned upon our Religion.

These we sincerely and solemnly professe, as in the sight of God, the searcher of all hearts, taking the words plainly and simply, in their usuall and familiar sense, without any Equivocation or Mentall Reservation whatsoever.

Given to me by Mr Tho. Belasyse
26. Oct. 1673.